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DEPUTY WHIP

Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Environment and Public Works

Foreign Relations

Small Business and Entrepreneurship

Special Committee on Aging

United States Senate

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May 8, 2007

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Chairman
Committee on Environment and Public Works
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable James Inhofe
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment and Public Works
456 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Boxer and Ranking Member Inhofe:

I appreciate your attention and commitment to Louisiana as we have worked together on the Water Resources Development Act. The 2006 Senate-passed WRDA and the committee-reported bill this year recognize the importance of our state to the nation and fulfill your commitments to our region and this nation.

The long-term sustainability of south Louisiana is in the best interest of all Americans. Every state in the nation recognized the importance of Louisiana's energy infrastructure when the average gasoline prices spiked nearly one dollar in the aftermath of the 2005 storms.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita caused the death of more than 1,200 lives in Louisiana, the loss of hundreds of thousands of homes, 217 square miles of coastal land and billions of dollars in economic losses. This same area provides this nation with nearly 30 percent of the oil and gas required to power America's economy and is home to five of the nation's top ports. These same maritime facilities comprise the world's largest port system and provide a conduit for products for up to 35 states with commerce -- including the main artery used by farmers to get their crops to market.

The WRDA bill will serve as a historic milestone for our state and its recovery efforts.

The proposed manager's amendment to the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 also addresses some important priorities, including:

1. The closure and restoration of the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet;
2. Directing the Corps to set project recommendations for future hurricane protection projects;
3. Re-affirming Congress's commitment to the authorized, accurate 100-year level of hurricane protection for the greater New Orleans area;
4. Restoring the authorized level of protection for Lafourche Parish under the Larose to Golden Meadow project;
5. Authorizing the 17-year-old Morganza to the Gulf hurricane protection project;
6. Consolidating hurricane protection efforts in lower Jefferson Parish;

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7. Authorizing funding and a long-term framework for an integrated coastal/hurricane protection program; and
8. Establishing the Louisiana Water Resources Council as the exclusive peer-review entity for all water resources projects in south Louisiana

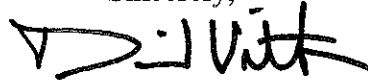
However, the current proposal retreats from the 2006 Senate-passed bill and committee-reported bill this year and jeopardizes the sustainability of south Louisiana and the energy security of this nation.

You both witnessed firsthand the devastation of south Louisiana and the fundamental mistakes of the federal government related to Louisiana's hurricane and flood protection system. According to the Senate Budget Committee, Congress has provided more than \$100 billion in direct assistance and other incentives to help these areas recover. If we learn anything from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, let it be that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

The proposed manager's amendment goes a long way to restoring the level of hurricane protection that Congress intended – the 100-year level of protection – but the amendment is deathly silent on actually improving the standard of protection as Congress intended by the ongoing analysis and design. This was a vital component of both the 2006 Senate-passed bill and the committee-reported version a few months ago. While I am not asking that the entire report be authorized sight unseen, a clear, expedited mechanism to authorize the most vital components of greater hurricane protection that will prevent a repeat of our 2005 losses is a fundamental responsibility of this body.

I look forward to working with you on an amendment to fill this void.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Vitter", with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Vitter
U.S. Senator